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## Inside Track

# French general consul expects increased business with Minnesota

By Neal St. Anthony | NOVEMBER 17, 2017 — 1:50PM

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Guillaume Lacroix, the Chicago-based French consul general, expect commerce to grow between Minnesota and France.

Lacroix's appointment followed the election earlier this year of President Emmanuel Macron, the pro-business centrist who trounced Marine Le Pen, the far-right nationalist.

Marcon, 39, is a former Goldman Sachs investment banker who previously served as economy minister.

In a telephone interview this week from Chicago, Lacroix, who is addressing the French chamber at its annual gala Friday (tonight), said he hopes to foster increased trade and investment between France and Minnesota.

"France is open for business," Lacroix said. "Minnesota companies such as Ecolab, 3M and General Mills... have all increased investment in France in recent years. And this is the objective of the new administration in France. We have good engineers, training and labor force."

Lacroix said about 7,500 Minnesotans work for French business concerns in Minnesota.

At least one French company has increased its investment in Minnesota recently.

Pack 3.0, a simulation packaging design firm headquartered in Sologne was recruited to a successful collaboration with General Mills, thanks to the efforts of the French Chamber.

Sharon Lund, president of the Falls Agency, a Minneapolis marketing firm that is working with Pack 3.0, said the company seeks other local opportunities.

"The options for innovation just ramped up as packaging companies can now explore and gain speed-to-market," Lund said of Pack 3.0's "3D predictive technology" that is an advancement over traditional "physical trials methods."

Serge Batkam, a Pack 3.0 executive, is scheduled to speak to the French chamber early in 2018.

Minnesota exported \$333 million worth of goods to France in 2016, France ranks 16th for Minnesota exports behind the United Kingdom, Germany, Canada, Mexico and other countries.